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SUBJECT: DUTCH REQUEST MORE INFORMATION ON COALITION AGAINST
WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

REF: (A) STATE 67955

(B) Bryan Olthof - David Grier emails of May 19, 2006

¶1. Emboff delivered reftel demarche to Stefan Verbunt, CITES Management Authority for the Netherlands, and Senior Executive Officer with the Department of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Verbunt stated that, while he agreed in principle with the objectives of the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT), he had some questions that he would like clarified before the GONL goes forward with making a decision on whether to join the coalition. Specifically, he asked:

¶A. Could CAWT's objectives be accomplished within the existing umbrella of CITES? Verbunt stated that he planned to consult with John Sellar, Senior Officer for Anti-smuggling, Fraud and Organized Crime with CITES, to get his views on CAWT and how it could work together with CITES.

¶B. Are day-to-day operations and priorities of the CAWT government or NGO-driven? Verbunt also was curious to learn how NGOs become members of CAWT and whether member governments have a chance to vet them to make sure they are not aligning themselves with extremist NGOs.

¶C. Has CITES been notified about CAWT? Verbunt was concerned with how, as host of next year's CITES Conference of Parties (COP), a Dutch decision to join or not join CAWT would be received by the CITES Secretariat. In addition, he asked whether the USG planned to raise CAWT during the upcoming COP.

¶2. Verbunt plans to consult with some CAWT-member NGOs along with his CITES counterpart in the UK to discuss their decisions to join CAWT.

¶3. Emboff also delivered demarche to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Economic and Environmental Cooperation Policy Advisor Martijn Lucassen. He indicated that MFA would likely defer to the Agriculture Ministry's CITES Management Authority on whether to join CAWT.

Arnall